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ABSTRACT

The Fort Hays State University (Kansas) training program for career/vocational education for the handicapped is described. The program addresses unique regional needs of a sparsely populated area, the high proportion of handicapped students and professionals remaining in the area, and a special education teacher shortage. Five competency areas are considered, including preparing handicapped students for employment ranging from competitive work to supervised work settings: coordinating services among general, vocational, and special educators, support personnel, state service and rehabilitation agencies, community and future employees: and assisting employees in meeting federal regulations. Competencies for each of four components are listed. A high school demonstration program is described which focuses on job related information, self information, school information, and community information. (CL)

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A PERSONNEL PREPARATION PROGRAM WITH EMPHASIS IN CAREER/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED

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Elaine Beason, Ed.D.
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Tom Stafford

The objective of this presentation is to describe a personnel preparation training program at Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas. The training model prepares graduates to develop, implement, and coordinate a career/vocational education program that involves community employers, regular/special/vocational educators, state agency personnel, handicapped students and their parents.

The presentation will include an overview of the national and state significance of the Fort Hays State University program, a description of the training model including objectives, philosophy, and competencies and a description of the demonstration program at Hays High School, Hays, Kansas.

Overview

The vocational orientation of this program is a response to the high priority given career/vocational education of handicapped students by the Division of Personnel Preparation of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. In July 1979, Jasper Harvey, the Director of the DPP, listed career/vocational education as the Division's fifth highest priority as reflected by funding requests. In excess of two (2) million dollars was actually funded for the 1980 Fiscal Year.

Several documented reasons may be given for the position of prominence

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granted to career/vocational education. As recently as 1972 the Associate Commissioner of Education, Ed Martin, was predicting that only 21% of the handicapped students leaving American public schools could be considered as having full employment skills. The remainder, numbering almost a half million a year, entered society with little chance for achieving independent status. In 1976 it was noted that of 13 million vocational education students in the United States, only 2% were considered handicapped. This figure becomes even more frightening when it is realized that the accepted prevalence of handicapped children in the public schools is 10% and few of these ever receive professional training. A more topical commentary on the plight of handicapped youth entering the adult world, dated this year, reports some progress but warns that "59% (of handicapped youth leaving school in the next four years) will be unprepared for community living and the world of work and will seek solutions for unemployment in welfare, out-patient assistance in clinics, and other public aid programs" (Miller, Sabatino & Larsen, 1980, p. 345). The average taxpayer, as inflation inexorably exhausts his real income, is moving away from social reform which takes his tax money and toward the cutting of social programs which may help him maintain his living standard. Appropriate career/vocational education for handicapped youth does cost the taxpayer money in its early stages, but overall saves billions of dollars by preventing handicapped individuals from swelling the dependency rolls. It has been estimated that for every dollar spent on the vocational habilitation of handicapped youth who would otherwise face institutionalization, fourteen (14) million dollars is saved in reduced future expenditures. [Conley, 1973]

The question may then be addressed to the university community regarding the steps taken to meet the critical aforementioned needs. The answer is,

depressingly, precious little. In a recent survey of 243 state colleges and universities, only five listed either specific secondary or career education courses in their program (Miller, 1975).

Responding to these needs the Division of Personnel Preparation began looking for programs involving career/vocational education. During the 1979-80 Fiscal Year, 63 programs were funded with at least a partial emphasis on career/vocational or secondary level education.

One of these programs is entitled Preservice Preparation of Vocational/Career Support Personnel for Sparsely Populated Regions and is administered through Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas. Prior to discussing this grant, a brief profile of the state of Kansas is in order. Its population of less than 2.4 million is spread over 82,000 square miles. This may not mean much to the casual observer until one realizes that the city of Pittsburgh has approximately the same population and is located in a state slightly larger than half the size of Kansas. It is indeed a rural state. Cities with relatively large metropolitan areas, such as Wichita, Topeka and Kansas City, Kansas, are found in the central or eastern sections of the state, the largest city in western Kansas, Great Bend, has a mere 16,000 population. Fort Hays State University is the sole university in western Kansas. It is a liberal and applied arts, state-assisted institution with an enrollment of 5,500 students. Hays has a population of 15,000 and is the catchment area for surrounding counties. A minimum of migration is noted in this section of the state as strong neighborhood roots are often nurtured throughout a lifetime.

In many ways Kansas is presently unprepared for the vocational/career needs of its handicapped citizens. There are currently no certification requirements, no coordination of vocational/career services and no allotted

release time for the already overburdened teachers of secondary level handicapped youth to deal with such matters. Although work/study programs for this level of youngster were begun during the 1960's, they have been conducted on a hit-or-miss basis. During the 1978-79 school year the 14,366 handicapped youth between the ages of 12 and 21 who would be eligible for career/vocational education, were served by 25 vocational educators. This comes to a ratio of 575 eligible students for every career/vocational instructor.

Dr. Elaine Beason joined the faculty of Fort Hays State University in 1977 and brought with her considerable expertise in providing career/vocational education services for handicapped youth. She has previously worked extensively in the development and implementation of project FIT, a vocational education program serving the handicapped, which has been adopted by over 100 school districts in the state of Texas. Upon arriving in Hays, she immediately perceived the dearth of secondary educational programs for the handicapped and her background enabled her to envision future possibilities. She then began writing the grant which will now be described. The Bureau of Education for the Handicapped saw the relevance of the grant as written and it was funded in June 1979.

Program Uniqueness

The Career/Vocational Coordinator Training Program at Fort Hays State University addresses several unique regional needs:

a. Sparsely populated areas-

Western Kansas can be considered a sparsely populated region. The implications for educational services are that professionals must be trained to meet multiplistic needs for handicapped students

on a non-categorical basis.

b. Retention of handicapped students and trained professionals in Western Kansas-

A majority of handicapped students living in western Kansas remain in the area after completion of education and training. The same is true of professionals who receive their baccalaureate and graduate training in western Kansas. Therefore educational programs can be highly organized to meet regional needs.

c. Special education teacher shortage-

There is a special education teacher shortage in Kansas and especially in western Kansas. The training program at Fort Hays State University includes intensive practicum experiences (12 semester hours) for graduate students in their home community and on-the-job. This provides immediate services to local education agencies and their handicapped students. It also provides supervised development of a career/vocational education program by university personnel.

Therefore, the personnel preparation training program in Career/Vocational Education for the Handicapped has been designed to meet the unique needs of western Kansas by preparing graduate students to provide services (Career/Vocational) to all exceptional students who present a need, regionalizing professional competencies, and creating an immediate impact on handicapped students.

Program Philosophy

It is believed that career/vocational education is essential for maximum capability development of handicapped students.

It is believed that education for handicapped students must include instruction and/or training toward realistic adult living goals.

It is believed that career/vocational education should be provided for handicapped students of all ages culminating the last two years in highly structured instruction for community job or vocational (occupational) placement.

It is believed that the above statements cannot be met unless there are trained professionals who are competent in specified skills and committed to providing career/vocational education for the handicapped.

Program Objectives

The personnel preparation program will train professionals who have the competencies to:

a. prepare handicapped individuals for employment ranging from competitive work in local job market to supervised work settings,

b. coordinate services among general, vocational and special educators, support personnel, state service and rehabilitation agencies, community employers and future employees,

c. establish scope and sequence in secondary level special education based upon adult living requirements,

d. establish an educational/vocational program that would minimize the need for additional social/vocational post-secondary services for handicapped individuals,

e. assist community employers in meeting federal regulations established in Public Law 93-112.

Figure 1.1

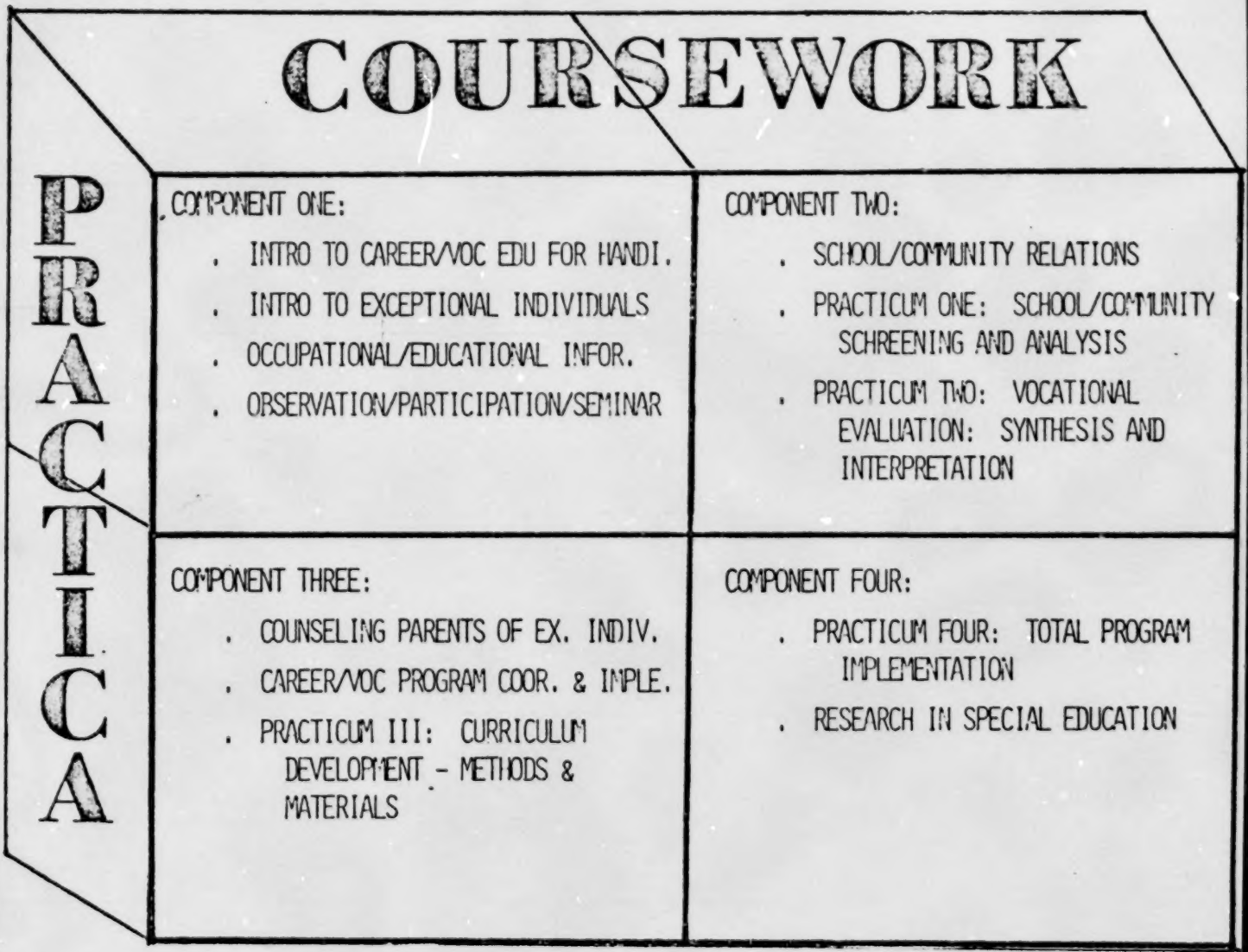

COURSEWORK
PRACTICA
COMPONENT ONE:
. INTRO TO CAREER/VOC EDU FOR HANDI.
. INTRO TO EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUALS
. OCCUPATIONAL/EDUCATIONAL INFOR.
. OBSERVATION/PARTICIPATION/SEMINAR
COMPONENT TWO:
. SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS
. PRACTICUM ONE: SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SCHREENING AND ANALYSIS
. PRACTICUM TWO: VOCATIONAL EVALUATION: SYNTHESIS AND INTERPRETATION
COMPONENT THREE:
. COUNSELING PARENTS OF EX. INDIV.
. CAREER/VOC PROGRAM COOR. & IMPLE.
. PRACTICUM III: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT - METHODS & MATERIALS
COMPONENT FOUR:
. PRACTICUM FOUR: TOTAL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
. RESEARCH IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Figure 1.2.1

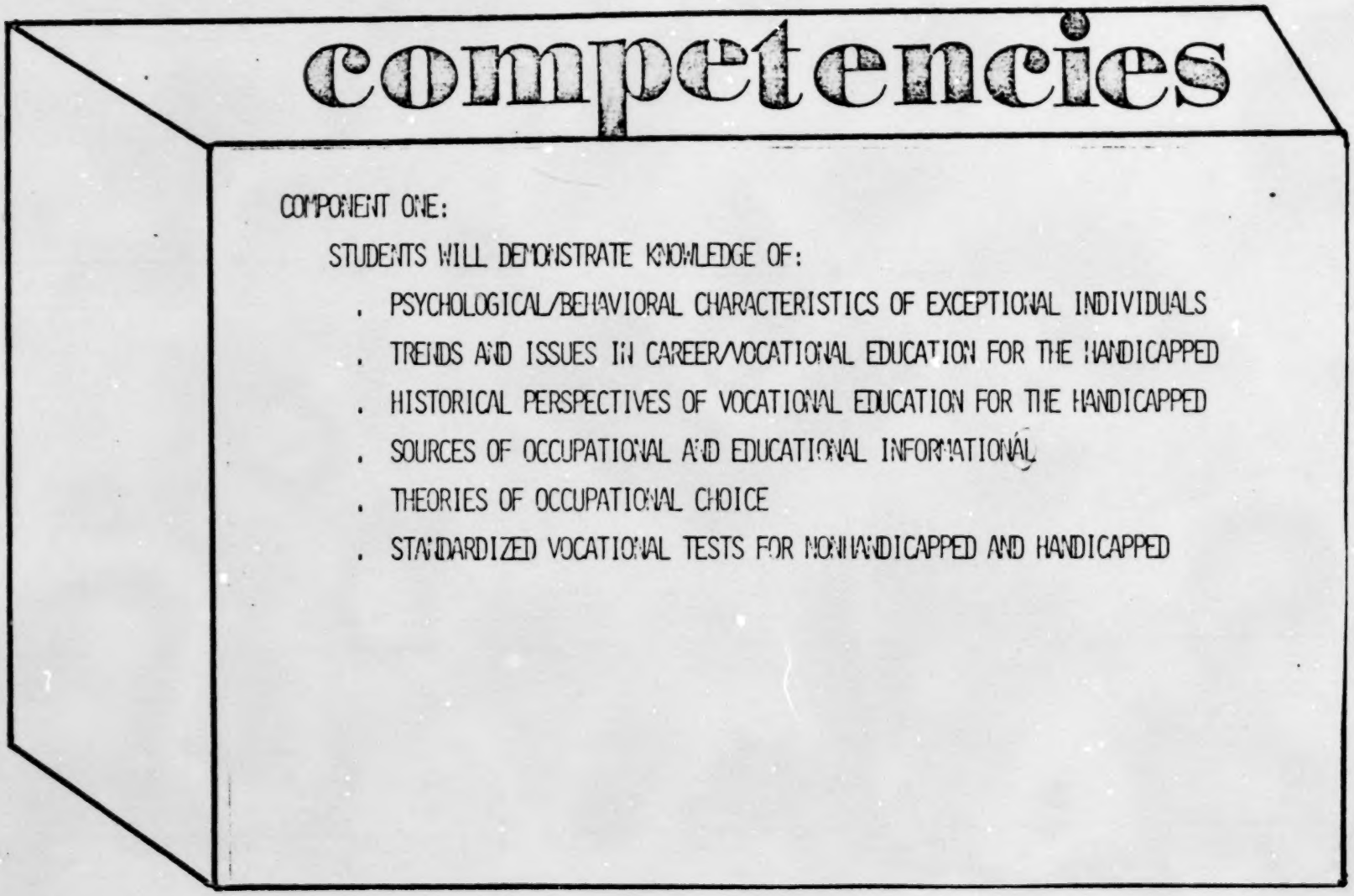

competencies
COMPONENT ONE:
STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF:
. PSYCHOLOGICAL/BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUALS
. TRENDS AND ISSUES IN CAREER/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED
. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED
. SOURCES OF OCCUPATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL INFORMATIONAL
. THEORIES OF OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE
. STANDARDIZED VOCATIONAL TESTS FOR NONHANDICAPPED AND HANDICAPPED

Figure 1.2.2

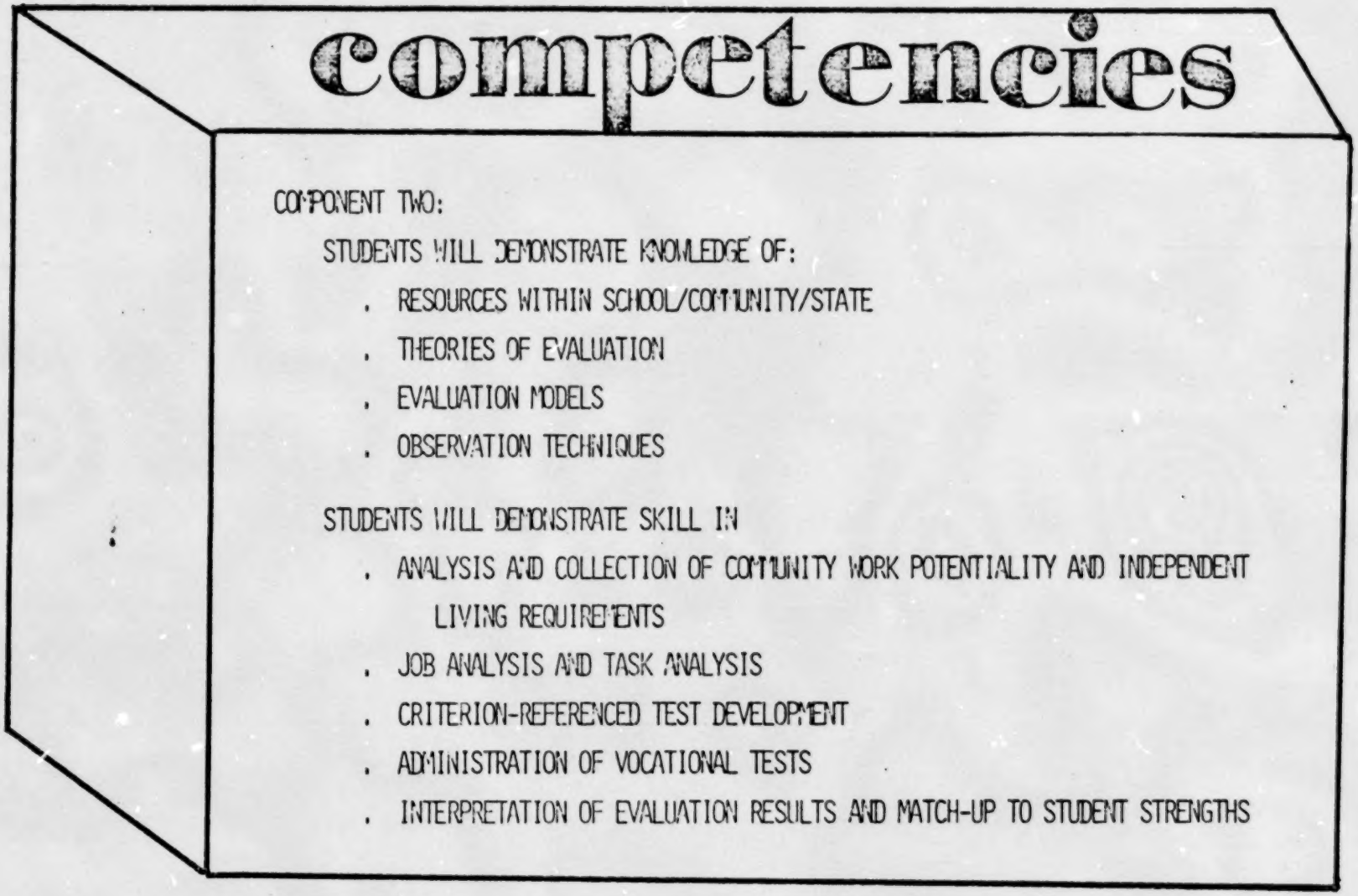

competencies
COMPONENT TWO:
STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF:
. RESOURCES WITHIN SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/STATE
. THEORIES OF EVALUATION
. EVALUATION MODELS
. OBSERVATION TECHNIQUES
STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE SKILL IN
. ANALYSIS AND COLLECTION OF COMMUNITY WORK POTENTIALITY AND INDEPENDENT LIVING REQUIREMENTS
. JOB ANALYSIS AND TASK ANALYSIS
. CRITERION-REFERENCED TEST DEVELOPMENT
. ADMINISTRATION OF VOCATIONAL TESTS
. INTERPRETATION OF EVALUATION RESULTS AND MATCH-UP TO STUDENT STRENGTHS

Figure 1.2.3

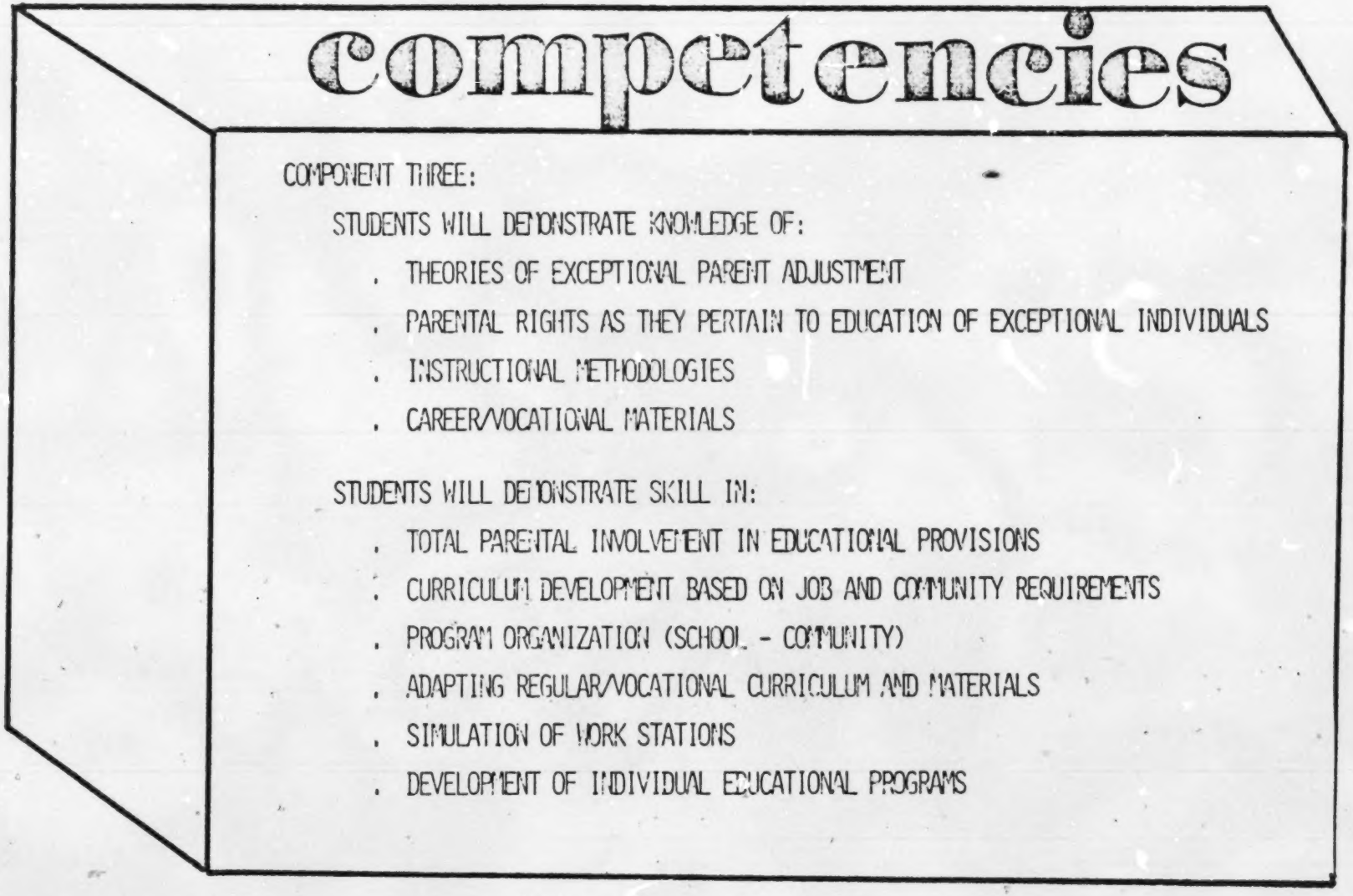
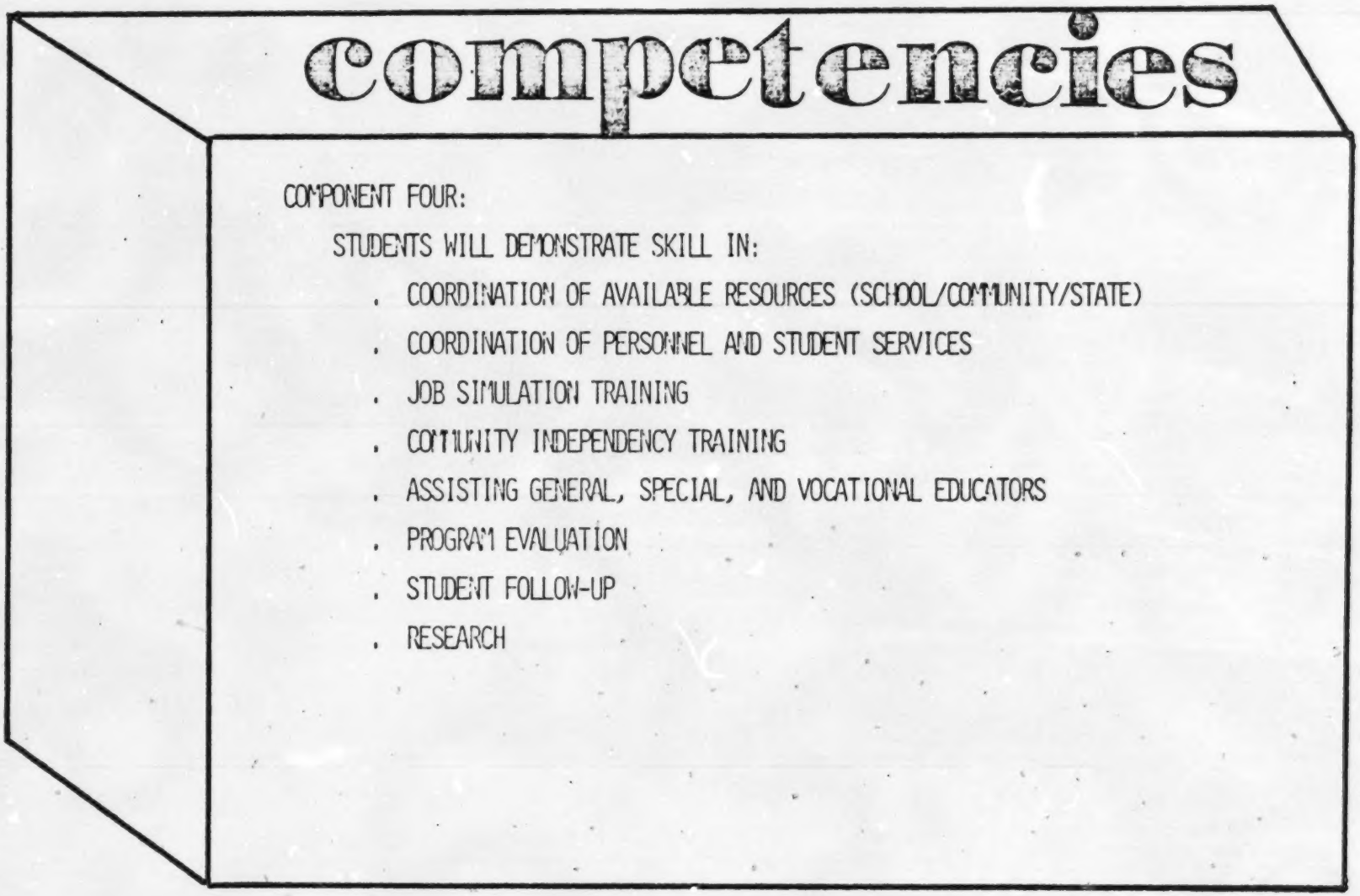

competencies
COMPONENT THREE:
STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF:
. THEORIES OF EXCEPTIONAL PARENT ADJUSTMENT
. PARENTAL RIGHTS AS THEY PERTAIN TO EDUCATION OF EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUALS
. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGIES
. CAREER/VOCATIONAL MATERIALS
STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE SKILL IN:
. TOTAL PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL PROVISIONS
. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT BASED ON JOB AND COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS
. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION (SCHOOL - COMMUNITY)
. ADAPTING REGULAR/VOCATIONAL CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS
. SIMULATION OF WORK STATIONS
. DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Figure 1.2.4


competencies
COMPONENT FOUR:
STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE SKILL IN:
. COORDINATION OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES (SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/STATE)
. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL AND STUDENT SERVICES
. JOB SIMULATION TRAINING
. COMMUNITY INDEPENDENCY TRAINING
. ASSISTING GENERAL, SPECIAL, AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATORS
. PROGRAM EVALUATION
. STUDENT FOLLOW-UP
. RESEARCH

Orientation of the Personnel Training Program

The program is oriented toward a task analytical approach in the collection and assessment of requirements relative to adult living goals and specific jobs within a geographical or employment community. The requirements are used as the basis of handicapped student skill evaluation, career/vocational training curriculum and pre-vocational curriculum. Additionally, task analysis is applied to regular and vocational education curriculum to assist in adaptations and alterations in meeting individual student needs. Thus, students in the master's program are taught observational, collectional, analytical, synthetical, evaluational, instructional, and coordinational skills that are used to develop and implement career/vocational education and training for the handicapped.

Course Requirements

A minimum of 36 credit hours is required for the master's degree with emphasis in career/vocational education. Twelve of the credit hours are intensive competency-based practica experiences. Courses and practica are taken in a sequential order; completing one of the four components before moving to the next sequential component (Figure 1.1).

Each component has general and specified competencies that students develop (Figure 1.2).

The competencies developed in this training program are being demonstrated at Hays High School. The following is a description of the Demonstration Program.

Description of Demonstration Program

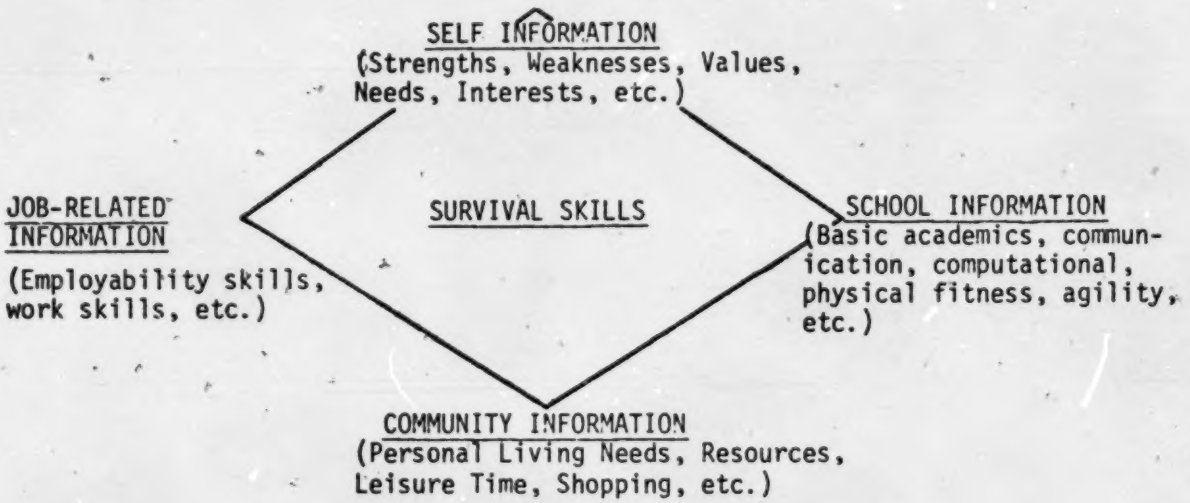
As previously mentioned, the objectives of the demonstration program seek to prepare the students:

a. for employment ranging from competitive work in the local job market to more supervised work settings,

b. to live as independently as possible, and

c. to contribute to the community in which they live.

These objectives require efforts directed toward handicapped students in four main areas.


SELF INFORMATION
(Strengths, Weaknesses, Values, Needs, Interests, etc.)
JOB-RELATED INFORMATION
(Employability skills, work skills, etc.)
SURVIVAL SKILLS
SCHOOL INFORMATION
(Basic academics, communication, computational, physical fitness, agility, etc.)
COMMUNITY INFORMATION
(Personal Living Needs, Resources, Leisure Time, Shopping, etc.)

The following is a general breakdown of each of the four areas of concentration:

Job Related Information

1. Listing of business and industry in community. We become familiar with what jobs are available.

2. Elimination of inappropriate or unrealistic places of employment. We screen the prospective jobs for compatability for our students.

3. Further elimination of inappropriate or unrealistic places of employment after initial contact. We make contact with employer about potential job openings for our students.

4. Delineation of potential jobs after inventory of places of employment. After determining what jobs are available, those that are not compatible for our students are no longer considered.

5a. Interview with personnel manager to obtain related employee information.

b. Interview and observation with supervisor of each job to obtain job requirements.

c. Observation of workers on each job to task analyze skills requirements. These interviews and observations are done to acquaint us first hand with everything we can learn and know about the job to better allow us to prepare our students for a particular job.

6. Incorporation of related employee information job requirements, and skill requirements for all jobs. We are now ready to begin utilizing all this collected information to match up the proper student with the proper job.

7a. Design of assessment Battery. This assessment battery is designed to pinpoint student capabilities of job requirements that habe been previously identified.

b. Design of Job Training Modules. This design of a training module would include a section on orientation, basic academic skills, pre-skill development, skill development, and post skills development. This module will be developed using a performance objective format.

8a. Assessment of student capabilities. This allows us to utilize the assessment battery to measure specific performance skills of each student as well as indicating each student's best potential job source.

b. Assessment of student's capabilities during mainstreamed classwork with regard to social skills to production.

9. Match up of student capabilities with job requirements. Here we attempt to match up the student's capabilities with specific identified job requirements to enable the student to obtain the best potential job. This is done by analyzing the student's strengths and weaknesses and matching them with a compatible work situation.

10. Job Training-This is accomplished by providing both classroom and individualized management. The classroom setting provides training for paper/pencil activities as well as a simulated work area where the work station or environment of the actual job setting is reproduced as adequately as possible. If these conditions cannot be adequately simulated, then we work with the student on actual on-the-job training, if this is permissible by the employer. The students are given this management of instruction on an individual basis. All their training and instruction is given on a competency-based format.

11. Follow-up after student employment. We offer follow-up services to our students after employment has been obtained. This is done at various intervals to make us aware of the progress of the student and if additional training is needed we can offer it. This gives us feedback as to the effectiveness of our program.

Self Information

1. Results from previous school evaluations.
2. Interviews with parents or family.
3. Discussions with students themselves.
4. Meetings with student and involved resources.
5. Self-image development.

School Information

1. Academic records.
2. Social and behavioral skills.
3. Vocational achievement.
4. Physical abilities and limitations.
5. Conceptual thinking to problem solving.

Community Information

1. Community resources and their use.
2. Available leisure time activities.
3. Housing information.
4. Mobility training.
5. Money management.

All areas of concentration will be developed on a scope and sequence format that will be applicable to all age groups of handicapped students.

Summation

A description of the personnel preparation training program in career/vocational education for the handicapped has been presented. The necessity and significance for such a program was demonstrated by BEH funding priorities, national research data and the established personnel needs of Kansas and, in particular Western Kansas.

The program uniqueness, based upon rurality, teacher and handicapped student retention in the geographical region, and teacher shortage supported the program philosophy, objectives, and orientation of the training program. A description of the Demonstration Program at Hays High School, Hays, Kansas was offered by delineating objectives and areas of instruction. The primary purpose of the program was stated to prepare personnel to develop, implement, and coordinate a program that involves community employers, regular/special/vocational educators, and agency personnel in providing career/vocational education for handicapped individuals.

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